

To: Co-Chairs Representative Zalaski and Senator Prague  
February 28, 2012

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 5291, for a stronger minimum wage.**

Thank you for allowing me to tell my story. I am here in support of raising the minimum wage and eliminating the commission credit. Working at a clothing retailer for the last year, I recently had my pay cut and replaced with a 3% commission on my sales. 3% isn't very much, but during the Christmas rush in November and December, it did give me a little financial stability. Since then, it has become very difficult to get by on my reduced base pay.

Even for those of us in Hartford, living in Connecticut is very expensive, as is supporting my son as he goes through college, making it very difficult for me to keep up with my bills ten months out of the year. As nice as it is to make a direct commission on my work, in no way does it replace a decent wage. I know that if my base pay were returned to the level it was at before - very near the \$9.75 amount that's been proposed as the new minimum wage - I would be much more secure financially, and would stop seeing bills pile up and debts increase. The difference that makes in a family's life is huge, in what we can spend on food, clothing, rent.

The media portrays minimum-wage workers as too young or lazy to deserve anything better. I can tell you that is not true. Unemployment is still very high in this state, and most of us are hard-working adults, with families, who have no choice but to accept low-wage positions to try and make ends meet. So I urge this committee and the members of the legislature to support increasing the minimum wage, not only because it is the fair thing to do, but because our local economy relies on it.

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